

Are You DENSE?

ADVOCACY

because your life matters®

May 3, 2014

Honorable James Marleau, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Policy
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Support of SB 879 –Breast Density Reporting

Dear Chairperson Marleau and members of the Senate Committee on Health Policy;

My name is Nancy Cappello and I reside in Woodbury CT. I am founder of two national organizations whose mission is to reduce later stage breast cancers by educating the public about the risks and screening challenges of dense breast tissue. **I respectfully request that my correspondence be included in the record of the Public Hearing on May 6, 2014.**

Your support of SB 879 will lead to a **reduction in later stage breast cancers, less aggressive treatments and better life outcomes for women of Michigan and their families – as cancer is a family disease.**

In 2004, I was diagnosed with advanced stage IIIC breast cancer after a decade of 'normal' mammograms. **I first learned about my dense breast tissue after my cancer diagnosis, which was within weeks of what I refer to as my "happy gram" report which stated that the results of my mammogram were "normal."**

My physicians informed me that **my years of mammography screening failed to detect my cancer because of my dense breast tissue.** My cancer was the size of a quarter and has spread to 13 lymph nodes -remember a normal mammogram weeks before. Six surgeries, 5 months of chemotherapy, 24 radiation treatment, life-long medications, countless tests, massive medical costs and **a greater likelihood of dying prematurely from this disease; this is the reality of my advanced stage cancer.**

Searching the scientific journals, I was stunned to discover that my story, while compelling, is common as 40% of women have dense breast tissue. **National surveys report that less than one in 10 women learn about their breast density from their physician.** For more than two decades, research demonstrates that women with dense breast tissue have less than a 50% chance of having their cancer detected by mammography alone. **As density increases, the sensitivity of a mammogram to 'see' cancer decreases.** There are additional screening tools, when added to mammography, that significantly increase detection of small, invasive cancers invisible by mammogram. **Dense Breast Tissue is also a well-established predictor of breast cancer risk confirmed by 18 studies – across 8 countries.**

Armed with these startling scientific facts, I started working with the Connecticut legislature and, in **2009 Connecticut became the first state in the nation to standardize density reporting to women through their mammography report.**

Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc.

96 Rowley Road • Woodbury, CT 06798 • (203) 232-9570

AreYouDenseAdvocacy.org



501(c)(4) Public Charity